

GRAND FORKS COUNTY SPECIAL MEETING – March 27, 2009 – 11:30pm

Topic: Grand Forks County Budget for Emergency Flood Response and Other Flood Related Issues

The Board met pursuant to adjournment with Commissioners Murphy, Knauf, Schmisek, Pic and Malm present.

Jim Campbell, Emergency Management Director, gave an update on our flood response. He said our mission is to take emergency protective measures, make resources available to the public and private property owners and we do this to protect the life, health and safety of the citizens of Grand Forks County.

Mr. Campbell gave an update on our expenses. We are estimating we are spending approximately \$1.40 per sandbag, which includes the bag, sand and delivery. As of this morning based on the numbers we have, 100,000 bags have been made at a cost of \$140,000. We are estimating we will probably make another 100,000 bags throughout the weekend. We will re-evaluate the need for additional sandbags after 200,000 bags have been made.

As of 10:30am this morning the river is at 47.69 feet and we are expecting a crest at 52 feet on Sunday night or early Monday. We anticipate the river will stay at 51' to 52' range for approximately 5 to 7 days which is not good news because generally the weakest time for the earthen levees and ring dike on private property is after the river has crested and started to decrease.

Mr. Campbell said currently the Burke Addition has been their main response but also they have responded to other areas in the County. As of this morning the Burke Addition has received assistance from Grand Forks Air Force Base Personnel. We requested the US Corp of Engineers go out there this morning and look at the private dikes and give us an assessment and come back with the number of additional bags that will be needed to finish that subdivision. Hopefully we can have that accomplished by this evening in the Burke Addition.

Mr. Campbell said he has been in contact with FEMA and there is a possibility that there will be reimbursement for the protective measures that we have taken on private property. There are certain requirements we have to meet and certain procedures we have to follow to qualify. Our mission statement and our plans are in accordance with FEMA's guidelines and recommendations for reimbursement. One of the major problems is that this flood fight is considerably different than what FEMA is use to working with from the stand point of when we haul bags out of Sandbag Central they have to go on a dike within two hours or they will be frozen and be useless. That is a concept in reimbursement that does not fit well with FEMA's requirements. We are documenting everything.

Curt Kreun said Luellen Hart, Wayne Piche and Ed Christ are doing an outstanding job at EOC. He got a call at about 8:30pm last night from the property owners in the Burke Addition and overall they were extremely happy with the response the County has given them.

Mr. Kreun said maybe the Commission should consider having emergency sandbags on hand for any breaks in the dikes. You could work with your County Engineer to determine the number of emergency sandbags and where they should be stationed in the County. Mr. Kreun was thinking an additional 50,000 sandbags. Chairman Murphy asked if Mr. Onstad would have a place to store them. Mr. Onstad said that Mr. Kreun has a very good suggestion and they would have an area to store sandbags. They could easily handle a full semi load. Chairman Murphy said it sounds like that would work for the County.

Commissioner Pic said we should get the word out to the public as soon as we know the Kennedy Bridge will be closing. Mr. Feland said Grand Forks City Info Center will be doing press releases to keep the public informed.

Bret Burkholder, Correctional Center Administrator, gave an update on the last 24 hours at the Correctional Center. They have accepted 63 inmates from Cass County and they were booked in last night in four hours. The current population of the Correctional Center is 245 which is just above capacity. Mr. Burkholder said

there will be overtime as a result. Commissioner Malm asked if Mr. Burkholder had any idea when Cass County would be taking their inmates back. Mr. Burkholder said he does not know at this time.

Sheriff Hill said from a public safety stand point they started working shifts on Tuesday of 12 hours on 12 hours off. Michelle Olson is tracking all flood related expenses. There are two Deputies at the Burke Addition who are taking care of traffic. They have an inflatable boat out there in the event we have a medical emergency so we would be able to get people out. They have also set up a command post out there and they have another command post ready to go if needed in another area. The Sheriff Deputies are going out as reports come in for sandbags to assess the threat of flooding.

Ed Christ, Grand Forks County Social Services, said they are staffing the phones at the EOC 24 hours a day. Social Services has a core group of four at the EOC and there also are others from the County that are answering the phones. They have the schedule for the weekend worked out to cover the phones 24 hours a day.

Mr. Campbell said he anticipates spending \$280,000 on the flood response efforts.

Commissioner Pic asked Mr. Onstad if we have adequate road closed signage out in the County. Mr. Onstad said yes. Ed Nierode said Lane Magnuson has created a GIS map on our website showing all the County roads that have been closed. Mr. Nierode said the Grand Forks Herald and Grand Forks City are also using the map on their websites.

Mr. Campbell said their response is to take emergency protective measures, make resources available to public and private property owners and to protect the life, health and safety of citizens of Grand Forks County.

Grand Forks Fire Chief O'Neill offered the assistance of the Grand Forks City Fire Department to Grand Forks County if the response time of the Grand Forks City Fire Department would be better than the Rural Fire Department because of the road closures out in the County. Chief O'Neill stated the residents of Grand Forks County should be especially fire safe at this time because there are going to be delays.

Moved by Pic, seconded by Schmisek, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:03pm.

William Murphy, Chairman
Grand Forks County Commission

Debbie Nelson, County Auditor